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LETTER DATED 16 JULY 1998 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the remarks of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in connection with the report of the Secretary-General dated 2 June 1998, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1160 (1998).

I would appreciate it if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

98-20860 (E) 170798

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Annex

Remarks of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in connection with the report of the Secretary-General dated 2 June 1998, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1160 (1998)

The report of the Secretary-General dated 2 June 1998, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998 emphasizes the deterioration of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the ever greater number of refugees and displaced persons. However, no mention is made of the true causes of these developments.

The increase in violence in Kosovo and Metohija is brought about through the escalation of terrorist activity by the extremist separatist elements of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija despite the efforts of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia to solve the problems in this Province peacefully. This fact, as well as the fact that the terrorists are aided and financed from abroad and that men and arms are dispatched to the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in an organized way, have been noted by the representatives of the international community on many occasions.

Civilian population and property and government institutions and authorities have been targets of terrorists. In the period between 1 January and 8 July 1998 alone, Albanian separatists carried out 659 terrorist actions in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. Three hundred ninety-eight of these actions have been carried out against civilians and their property; 62 persons have been killed and 36 gravely and 37 lightly wounded. One hundred civilians have been abducted; 14 persons have been killed, 52 are unaccounted for and 24 persons have been released. Two hundred sixty-one terrorist attacks have been carried out against the members and property of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia; 31 members of the Ministry have been killed, 64 gravely and 39 lightly wounded and 5 members have been abducted. In 303 attacks, the Albanian separatists used automatic weapons, anti-armour launchers or mortars; in 44 instances they used snipers; in 17, hand grenades; in 5, explosive devices; and in 2 instances, handguns. They have burned houses and expelled the residents, sometimes even entire villages. In 204 other instances, the terrorists carried out their actions with a threat to use firearms. In addition to the said criminal acts of terrorism, 20 cases of vehicles being stopped and passengers being searched have been reported, as well as 29 terrorist raids of houses and other premises, all of which constitute grave criminal offenses.

The report condemns continued violence and calls on the two sides to show restraint and resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful solution. However, it makes no mention of the party responsible for the interruption of the dialogue. In failing to do so, the report does not elucidate the situation and makes no contribution to the resumption of negotiations.

The Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia are firmly committed to the continuation of dialogue on all questions

without any preconditions and without delay. These questions concern confidence-building measures and forms of self-governance and autonomy, which are to be based on full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, on the equality of all their citizens and ethnic communities and on international human rights standards.

The Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia have invested their best efforts in promoting dialogue and reaching peaceful, democratic and humane solutions, acting all along in accordance with law, responsibly and with utmost restraint.

Conversely, the leaders of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija have used every opportunity to stall the negotiations and eventually to interrupt the dialogue initiated after the meeting between President Milosevic and Ibrahim Rugova on 15 May 1998. They have done so also in an attempt to buy time for terrorists to extort new international pressure on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This policy, however, has recently been internationally condemned and major international factors have called on Kosovo and Metohija Albanian extremists to desist from separatism and terrorism. These factors have also undertaken to refrain from every action or gesture that would encourage opponents of dialogue and proponents of terrorism. An unequivocal condemnation of separatism and terrorism in Kosovo and Metohija would greatly contribute to the continuation of dialogue.

The Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia are fully committed to solving all outstanding issues related to the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija through political and peaceful means and unconditional dialogue. The framework for the solution of all these issues is full respect for the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia, equality of all the citizens and ethnic communities in the Province, full respect for relevant United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Council of Europe standards in the fields of human rights and national minorities.

The Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia guarantee equality to all their citizens, irrespective of their national, religious or ethnic origins. However, they provide sanctions for all those who are in breach of the laws of the country and threaten its integrity and sovereignty.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia are ready to continue the dialogue on the entire complex of problems besetting Kosovo and Metohija. To this end, they have supported the Moscow joint statement of Presidents Milosevic and Yeltsin (see A/1998/526, annex) and taken concrete measures to implement its provisions. The ongoing implementation of these measures is telling proof of Yugoslavia's firm commitment to the policy of dialogue and a quest for a peaceful solution.

Of particular concern are humanitarian questions, including measures relating to the return of persons displaced by terrorist activities. To promote these measures, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has adopted a concrete

programme of return for these persons, providing material assistance for the reconstruction of their homes.

In that context, contacts have been made with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Offices of the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees and Human Rights, aimed at establishing meaningful cooperation and bringing about joint involvement in solving all questions relating to the return of displaced persons. Letters have been sent to Mr. Sommaruga, Mrs. Ogata and Mrs. Robinson, and extensive contacts and mutually satisfactory cooperation have been established with their representatives in Belgrade and field officers in Pristina.

A request has been made to Mrs. Ogata to assist the visit of the Commissioner for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia to Albania to tackle the problem of return of displaced persons. In a letter dated 30 June 1998, the representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Belgrade expressed UNHCR readiness to help in this regard and conveyed the satisfaction of High Commissioner Ogata with the constructive cooperation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has taken all necessary measures to ensure successful solutions of this problem, guaranteeing safe return and security to all the returnees.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has also lifted all restrictions on the access and free movement of foreign diplomats, representatives of international organizations and journalists in Kosovo and Metohija. It has also expressed readiness to allow the countries that have requested it to increase the number of personnel in their embassies in Belgrade.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has recently opened talks with the representatives of OSCE on simultaneous normalization of Yugoslavia's relations with the Organization and the return of the long-term mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is expected that the talks will be resumed soon.

No threat to neighbouring countries, much less to regional peace and security, ensues from the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is resolved to solve all problems by political means and, in so doing, is guided by the principles of openness, good-neighbourliness, equitable cooperation, non-interference into internal affairs and full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries.